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WIU President to Speak at Son's EIU Commencement

Apr-28-2008

Al Goldfarb has witnessed many commencement exercises in his 31-year career in higher education, but it's safe to say that one at Eastern Illinois University on Saturday will rank among his favorite.

Goldfarb, president of Western Illinois University, will deliver the commencement address during the 3 p.m. ceremony, when his son, Jason Goldfarb, receives his master's degree in college student affairs from EIU.

"I'm very honored to be asked to speak by the administration at Eastern," Al Goldfarb said, jokingly adding that he's rather nervous about facing his son's critique.

Not to worry -- Jason will likely go easy on his father as they share the special day.

"I am really excited that my father was given the honor to speak at my commencement," Jason said. "Having my father speaking at commencement adds to an already very special event."

Al Goldfarb said his message will focus on the importance of graduates using their experiences in higher education to better the world around them.

He's excited to see that his son plans to do just that, as he's already accepted a job as an academic adviser at Heartland Community College in Normal.

It was just one of many job offers Jason received, said his thesis adviser, Professor Charles Eberly.

A look at his accomplishments makes it easy to see why. Jason, who earned his bachelor's degree in applied mathematics from Millikin University in December 2005, has excelled at EIU, both personally and academically.

"He's really an ideal student," Eberly said, describing Jason as conscientious, pleasant, encouraging, affable, polite, respectful, punctual, humble and modest.

In fact, Jason was awarded the Distinguished Graduate Student Award from the college student affairs department this spring.

Making Jason's many accomplishments even more impressive is the fact that he has dealt with hydrocephalus all of his life.

"He is an amazing person," Al Goldfarb said. "He has dealt with significant medical issues, and I'm just very proud of the ways he's succeeded and dealt with his issues."

"His master's thesis ('The Role of Fraternities in the Spiritual Development of Members'), at many doctoral-granting institutions, would suffice as a dissertation," Eberly said.

Eberly said he's heard "nothing but great reports" about Jason's work as a graduate assistant in the Student Recreation Center under the supervision of Director Ken Baker.

Jason has also been president of the College Student Personnel Association and served on the Graduate Student Advisory Council and University Judicial Board.



When Jason Goldfarb (left) graduates from EIU on May 3, his father, Western Illinois University President Al Goldfarb (right) will give the commencement address.

Jason is very modest about his father being a university president, never talking about the subject unless asked, Eberly said.

The father and son have a "wonderful relationship," Eberly said, and the two have accompanied each other on visits to many universities, including a tour of Chinese higher education institutions before Jason began classes at EIU.

"The background of experience he brought with him as a student was exceptional," Eberly said.

Jason, who chose EIU's college student affairs program for its reputation and emphasis on research and practical experience, said he has really enjoyed his time at the university.

"I have received a great deal of support from all of my teachers," Jason said. "Whenever I needed advice, their doors were always open. Also, my supervisors were very helpful with my career development."

By all indications, it's a career that will continue to make not only Al Goldfarb, but also Jason's EIU family, very proud.